

# LIVING WITH American Indian Art

The Hirschfield Collection

Alan J. Hirschfield  
WITH Terry Winchell

PHOTOGRAPHY BY W. Garth Dowling

FOREWORD BY Gaylord Torrence

ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY works of Native American art, most having never before been published or placed on public display, are presented in this stunning volume.

Objects created by extraordinary nineteenth-century artists working within the traditions of their own cultures are featured. These dramatic works from the Great Plains and adjoining Plateau regions—ornamented and symbolically charged clothing, elaborately embellished containers, cradles, horse gear and more—embody a distinctly powerful, beautiful and mysterious aesthetic.

Baskets from California, Navajo textiles, Pueblo pottery and Apache basketry from the Southwest are also included, together with a special collection of octopus bags from the Northwest.

Personal anecdotes throughout reveal the collector's vision and experiences that resulted in this rich assemblage. Chapter introductions by Terry Winchell, noted dealer in Native American antiques, review cultural aspects and practical uses of the objects among their creators.

A foreword by Gaylord Torrence, one of America's most respected authorities on American Indian art, not only validates the importance of the collection but also discloses the Hirschfields' respect for the power and spirit the objects emanate in their home.

For art and history buffs—and all those with a love of the American West—this gathering of beautiful objects will inspire and intrigue.

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Art



Alan J. Hirschfield, FORMER INVESTMENT BANKER and entertainment executive who served as President and CEO of Columbia Pictures and 20th Century Fox Film Corporation, has assembled one of the world's foremost collections of historic Plains Indian art.

He currently serves as a director of several nonprofit institutions and public companies. Alan and his wife, Berte, among numerous philanthropic commitments, are dedicated to improving the opportunities for Native American youth living on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.

Terry Winchell IS THE OWNER OF Fighting Bear Antiques in Jackson, Wyoming, specializing in Plains Indian beadwork, Navajo textiles and other Native American arts. He is the author of *Molesworth: The Pioneer of Western Design*. Winchell has performed appraisals for the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming, and consulted for the John Toomey Gallery in Chicago and Christie's in New York. He has been published in *Architectural Digest*, *Art & Antiques* and *Cowboys & Indians*.

Author's proceeds from the book will be donated to the Intertribal Education and Community Center at Central Wyoming College, adjacent to the Wind River Reservation.

Jacket photographs © 2012 W. Garth Dowling  
Jacket designed by Kurt Wahlner





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## Octopus/Fire Bags

THE DESIGNATION *octopus* came from museum terminology and references the eight “tentacles” along the bottom edge of the bag. In the Pacific Northwest, however, the bags were called fire bags. Like tobacco bags, octopus/fire bags held pipes, flints and steels for starting fires. Early images show the octopus/fire bag tucked under the belt of the Métis, a person of both American Indian and European heritage.

Octopus/fire bags were decorated with abstract floral and curvilinear designs and generally have a unique image on each side of the bag inspired by Mission school embroidery. The skill of the bead worker is especially evident in the raised surfaces of beads, which create an almost three-dimensional perspective on many of the bags. Some bags from the Red River Métis area are exceptional in design and execution.

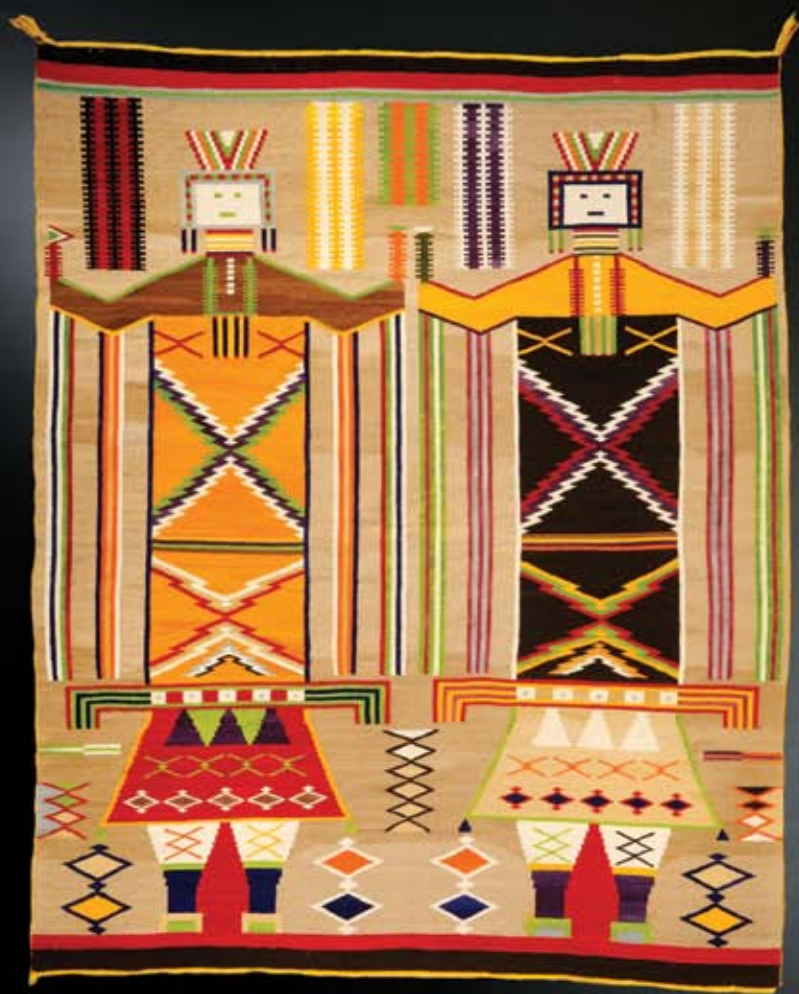
The Iroquois and Ojibwa who traveled west during the fur trade era were no doubt the first people responsible for these unusual tab bags, and other tribes were quick to make their own versions. The Cree in the northern part of Manitoba soon created a variant of the design.

The panel bag, named for its intricate woven beadwork panels, was most certainly a cousin of the octopus bag, but without the eight individual tentacles. The beaded panels on these bags, featuring motifs such as condors, deer and other quadrupeds, provide a vivid contrast to the trade cloth panels used in the construction of the bags.

The earliest examples of octopus/fire bags appear to date between 1830 and 1850, and, although they were probably produced until 1900, most came from the earlier period. The bags were made from a trade cloth very vulnerable to insect damage, and few have survived.

—T. W.





Although these high-top moccasins are one of the few Apache objects in our collection, the pictographic symbols and designs are similar to the imagery on many of the other beaded works, and the moccasins and these works seemed to belong together. The figures on the boots represent "Gan," or Mountain Spirits, supernatural beings who appear in ceremonies as masked dancers. These boots may have belonged to a "Gan" dancer.

Man's Boots, c. 1880  
Western Apache, Arizona  
Rawhide, native leather, glass beads,  
pigment  
Height: 19 1/2 inches



Qweeto:  
Rug, c. 1935  
Navajo, Arizona or New Mexico  
Native hand-spun and dyed wool  
82 1/2 x 68 inches

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Lance cases with buffalo rawhide shafts were unique to the Crow people. However, the incised triangular designs on this particular example are unusual.

Although not referenced in the historic literature, these cases appear in photographs dating from the last quarter of the nineteenth century; women—the keepers of military objects—were pictured with the objects in mounted parades.

Lance Case, c. 1890  
Crow, Montana  
Rawhide, native leather, glass beads, wood  
clay  
47 x 26 inches



Tobacco Bag, Pipe Stem Case  
and Pipe Stem, c. 1875  
Ute, Colorado or Utah  
Bag: Native leather, glass beads, pigment  
Stem: Wood, stone  
33 x 8 1/2 inches